

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2005

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:00 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members: Bloomfield, Kreider, Raser, Senhauser, Spraul-Schmidt, and Sullebarger present. Absent: Chatterjee, Kirk, and Wallace.

MINUTES

The Board unanimously approved the minutes of the Monday, August 29, 2005 meeting (motion by Sullebarger, second by Spraul-Schmidt) with corrections.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS & ZONING VARIANCES, 2957 ANNWOOD AVENUE, NEW GARAGE/POOL HOUSE, FENCE, TRELLIS AND LANDSCAPING, EAST WALNUT HILLS HISTORIC DISTRICT

Urban Conservator, William Forwood, presented a report on an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to work in the rear yard of 2957 Annwood Avenue including the construction of a combined pool house/garage, a trellis, fencing and landscaping.

This particular proposal has been before the Board at two prior meetings. At its June 13, 2005 meeting, the Board approved the demolition of the existing garage and the construction of an in-ground pool, trellis and other landscaping on the site. The Board denied a Certificate of Appropriateness and Zoning Variances for a combined pool house/garage and a wood privacy fence enclosing the rear yard.

At the August 15, 2005 Board meeting, the applicant returned with a revised fence and landscaping design, proposing separate structures for the garage and the pool house. The Board determined that a single building was more in keeping with the historic district and that the pool equipment should be located within that building. It agreed to consider a new structure having a maximum footprint of 900-square-feet. The Board also encouraged the applicant to consider lowering the height of the fence and deleting it along the property line adjacent a garage at 2929 Annwood Avenue. The Board tabled the application in order to give the owner an opportunity to make revisions to the plan.

Mr. Forwood gave a brief summary of revisions to the proposal. He indicated that the revised project combines the garage and pool house into a one-and-one-half-story brick garage with a partial basement for pool equipment and storage. The footprint measures 900 square feet and the height of the building 16'-0", both of which require Zoning Variances. He stated that the aluminum picket fence on the west property line is still 6'-0", the minimum height the owner believes necessary to provide security for the pool area.

Mr. Forwood circulated a copy of an e-mail from Karen Blocher abutting owner to the south, expressing concern that the proposed fence blocked access to the side wall of her garage. The revised plan has deleted the section of fence along the Blocher garage.

Fred Bowling, Vivian Llambi & Associates, Inc., was present to address the Board on behalf of the owner Ms. Catherine Cantey. He posted drawings of the actual changes to the project and how the new changes address the issues and concerns of the neighbors. As suggested, the footprint of the garage/pool house has been reduced to 900 square feet and the height to 16'-0".

Mr. Kreider joined the meeting at 3:12 p.m. and swore in speakers who wanted to address the Board.

Ms. Sullebarger suggested the view from the Blocher's family room would be broadened if the fence was moved further off the property line. Mr. Bowling pointed out that the revised picket fence is now completely open and that moving the fence would reduce the yard used for the Cantey's pets.

Rick Donaldson, the owner/resident of 2956 Annwood Avenue across the street from the Cantey property, and Dianne Marcus, the owner/resident of 2950 Wold Avenue, whose property abuts the Cantey property to the west presented a joint letter delineating their concerns for the revised plan. They questioned the necessity of the proposed fence, opposed granting Zoning Variances for the proposed garage/pool house, challenged the planting selections, and questioned measures to protect mature trees.

Donald Davis, a representative of the East Walnut Hills Assembly, emphasized that the assembly encouraged adherence to the spirit and intent of the East Walnut Hills Historic District conservation guidelines and the Zoning Code.

Ms. Sullebarger asked staff for examples of garages granted a Zoning Variance by the Board for size and/or height. Mr. Forwood enumerated several garages approved with height variances or location in the east Walnut Hills Historic District. He referred to a chart in the August 15, 2005 staff report that listed such projects in the neighborhood. Mr. Forwood reminded the Board that it frequently granted variances for garages under the old zoning code, which limited the height of an accessory building to only 12½ feet, but imposed no limit to its footprint.

Mr. Raser felt that the garage is still too high and should be lowered to 15'-0", a height that would not require a Zoning Variance. Mr. Bowling responded that the sloping ceiling on the second floor already minimized that space and that much of the additional height was required to match the steep rake of the house roof. Mr. Raser added that he did not feel the applicant had made a case for a 6'-0" tall fence and could not support it.

Mr. Kreider said that even though the guidelines did not encourage fences, the Board has allowed them at a minimal height. He observed that the fence separating the house and the garage was only 4'-0" high, so a taller fence at the property line was not justified for security. Mr. Kreider said that when he last heard this proposal, the Board gave the applicant guidance for the size of the garage and that although he is still concerned about the height, the redesign meets the area limits discussed.

Mr. Senhauser pointed out that even though the garage height is an issue, a standard garage height is 8'-8" to accommodate overhead doors. He emphasized that the two Zoning Variances before the Board were for the height and size of the garage; the fence required no variance. He felt a 5'-0" tall fence was adequate.

Ms. Sullebarger pointed out that the peak of the garage roof is at the second floor window level of the house and that she was satisfied with the design for the garage, as compatible with the site and neighborhood. Ms. Spraul-Schmidt agreed with her that the applicants have made significant efforts in changing the design to accommodate the Board and even the neighbors. She said she thought a 5'-0" fence would be acceptable.

After further discussion, the Board agreed that the new fence should be no higher than four feet. Mr. Bowling questioned the value of a 4'-0" fence on the west property line and argued that it would provide little more security than the existing wire fence. He questioned whether the 4'-0" fence would be worth building. Mr. Senhauser responded that the applicant could choose not to build the fence (or the garage/pool house for that matter). He said the Board was approving an

overall plan and that although all work executed would have to conform to that approval, the Board could not require that the applicant undertake every element.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted (motion by Sullebarger, second Spraul-Schmidt with amendment) Raser (nay) to take the followings actions:

1. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for a 4'-0" fence and landscape features, including the trellis, finding that the work meets East Walnut Historic Conservation Guidelines.
2. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness and the necessary Zoning Variance for the height and size of the garage as proposed, finding that relief from the literal interpretation of the Zoning Code will not be materially detrimental to the public health safety and welfare or injurious to property in the district or vicinity where the property is located and is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation as not to adversely affect the historic architectural or aesthetic integrity of the district.
3. All work shall guarantee the protection of mature trees, except those the Board approved for removal on June 13, 2005.

ADJOURN

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser, Chairman

Date: _____